Union Calendar No. 364

103D CONGRESS 2D SESSION

H. R. 4386

[Report No. 103-669]

► BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, authorizing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide compensation to veterans suffering from disabilities resulting from illnesses attributed to service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War, to provide for increased research into illnesses reported by Persian Gulf War veterans, and for other purposes.

AUGUST 4, 1994

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 11, 1994

Mr. Montgomery (for himself, Mr. Slattery, Mr. Rowland, Mr. Bili-RAKIS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CLEMENT, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. PARKER, Mr. KREIDLER, Mr. HALL of Ohio, Mr. TEJEDA, Mr. STUMP, Mr. Applegate, Mr. Bachus of Alabama, Mr. Sangmeister, Mr. Ja-COBS, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. COOPER, Mr. EDWARDS of Texas, Mr. KYL, Mr. Taylor of Mississippi, Mr. Brown of Ohio, Ms. Brown of Florida, Mr. Swett, Mr. Smith of New Jersey, Mr. Quinn, Mr. Bevill, Mr. CANADY, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. McHale, Mr. Hefner, Mr. MACHTLEY, Mr. COYNE, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. GORDON, Mr. Skelton, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Rahall, Mrs. Meek of Florida, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. CALLAHAN, Mr. MYERS of Indiana, Mr. McCurdy, Mr. ORTON, Mrs. LLOYD, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. BATEMAN, Mr. DELLUMS, Mr. CAMP, Mr. HOCHBRUECKNER, Mr. WELDON, Mr. LIPIN-SKI, Mr. PETE GEREN of Texas, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FROST, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. HANCOCK, Mr. RIDGE, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. LANCASTER, Mr. BROWDER, Mr. Hutchinson, Mr. Buyer, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Cramer, Mr. FINGERHUT, Mr. WILSON, Mr. LEWIS of Florida, Mrs. VUCANOVICH, Mr. PICKETT, Mr. FARR, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. TRAFICANT, Mr. CARR of Michigan, Mr. Frank of Massachusetts, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Deal, Mrs. Schroeder, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Everett, Mr. Solo-MON, Mr. CUNNINGHAM, Mr. BROWN of California, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. Lewis of California, Mr. Laughlin, Mr. Minge, Mr. Torkildsen, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. BARLOW, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. KLEIN, Mr. GREENWOOD,

Mr. Barca of Wisconsin, Mr. Whitten, Mr. Schiff, Mr. Barcia of Michigan, Mr. Dooley, Mr. Rose, Mr. Pallone, Mr. DeFazio, Mr. BACCHUS of Florida, Mr. DE LA GARZA, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. CLAY, Mr. OBERSTAR, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. DE LUGO, Mr. MICHEL, Mr. QUILLEN, Mr. HANSEN, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. BAKER of Louisiana, Mr. BONILLA, Mr. MANN, Mr. PE-TERSON of Florida, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. LAFALCE, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mr. Moakley, Mr. Synar, Mr. Neal of North Carolina, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin, Mr. LEVY, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. SPENCE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. Washington, Mr. Mineta, Mr. Gunderson, Mr. Thornton, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. KING, Mr. TUCKER, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. TORRES. Mr. GINGRICH, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. Hoagland, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Romero Barceló, Mr. Thompson of Mississippi, Mr. Emerson, Mr. Linder, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mr. CALVERT, Ms. FURSE, Ms. ENGLISH of Arizona, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. STENHOLM, Mr. PAYNE of Virginia, Mr. Chapman, Mr. McNulty, Mrs. Clayton, Mr. Hall of Texas, Mrs. BYRNE, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, and Mr. EVANS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AUGUST 4, 1994

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole
House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed
[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]
[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on May 11, 1994]

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, authorizing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide compensation to veterans suffering from disabilities resulting from illnesses attributed to service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War, to provide for increased research into illnesses reported by Persian Gulf War veterans, and for other purposes.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

- 2 This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Persian Gulf
- 3 War Benefits Act".

4 SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.

- 5 The Congress makes the following findings:
- 6 (1) During the Persian Gulf War, members of 7 the Armed Forces were exposed to numerous poten-8 tially toxic substances, including fumes and smoke from military operations, oil well fires, diesel exhaust, 9 10 pesticides, depleted uranium, infectious agents, chemoprophylactic agents, and indigenous dis-11 12 eases, and were also given multiple immunizations. It is not known whether these servicemembers were ex-13 posed to chemical or biological warfare agents. How-14 ever, threats of enemy use of chemical and biological 15 warfare heightened the psychological stress associated 16 17 with the military operation.
 - (2) Significant numbers of veterans of the Persian Gulf War are suffering from illnesses, or are exhibiting symptoms of illness, that cannot now be diagnosed or clearly defined. As a result, many of these conditions or illnesses are not considered to be service connected under current law for purposes of benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
 - (3) The Technology Assessment Workshop on the Persian Gulf Experience and Health conducted by the

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- National Institutes of Health concluded that the complex biological, chemical, physical, and psychological environment of the Southwest Asia theater of operations produced complex adverse health effects in Persian Gulf War veterans and that it appears that no single disease entity or syndrome exists. Rather, it appears that the illnesses suffered by those veterans result from multiple illnesses with overlapping symptoms and causes that have yet to be defined.
 - (4) That workshop concluded that the data concerning the range and intensity of exposure to toxic substances by military personnel in the Southwest Asia theater of operations are very limited and that such data were collected only after a considerable delay.
 - (5) In response to concerns regarding the health-care needs of Persian Gulf War veterans, particularly those who suffer from illnesses or conditions for which no diagnosis has been made, the Congress, in Public Law 102–585, directed the establishment of a Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Registry, authorized health examinations for veterans of the Persian Gulf War, and provided for the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of information regarding the health consequences of mili-

tary service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations 1 2 and to develop recommendations on avenues for research regarding such health consequences. In Public 3 Law 103-210, the Congress authorized the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care serv-5 6 ices on a priority basis to Persian Gulf War veterans. 7 The Congress also provided in Public Law 103–160 8 (the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994) for the establishment of a specialized envi-9 ronmental medical facility for the conduct of research 10 into the possible health effects of exposure to low levels 11 of hazardous chemicals, especially among Persian 12 13 Gulf veterans, and for research into the possible health effects of battlefield exposure in such veterans to de-14 15 pleted uranium.

(6) Further research and studies must be undertaken to determine the underlying causes of the illnesses suffered by Persian Gulf War veterans and, pending the outcome of such research, veterans who are seriously ill as the result of such illnesses should be given the benefit of the doubt and be provided compensation benefits to offset the impairment in earnings capacities they may be experiencing.

24 SEC. 3. PURPOSES.

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25 The purposes of this Act are—

1	(1) to provide compensation to Persian Gulf War
2	veterans who suffer disabilities resulting from illnesses
3	that cannot now be diagnosed or defined, and for
4	which other causes cannot be identified,
5	(2) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
6	to develop at the earliest possible date case assessment
7	strategies and definitions or diagnoses of such ill-
8	nesses,
9	(3) to promote greater outreach to Persian Gulf
10	War veterans and their families to inform them of on-
11	going research activities, as well as the services and
12	benefits to which they are currently entitled, and
13	(4) to ensure that research activities and accom-
14	panying surveys of Persian Gulf War veterans are
15	appropriately funded and undertaken by the Depart-
16	ment of Veterans Affairs.
17	SEC. 4. DEVELOPMENT OF CASE ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL
18	AND CASE DEFINITIONS.
19	(a) In General.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
20	shall—
21	(1) develop and implement at the earliest pos-
22	sible date a uniform case assessment protocol that will
23	ensure thorough assessment, diagnosis, and treatment
24	of all Persian Gulf War veterans suffering from ill-

1	ness	attributed	to	service	in	the	Southwest	Asia	thea-

- 2 ter of operations during the Persian Gulf War; and
- 3 (2) develop at the earliest possible date case defi-
- 4 nitions or diagnoses for illnesses associated with such
- 5 service.
- 6 (b) Consultation.—Development of a uniform case
- 7 assessment protocol under subsection (a)(1) and develop-
- 8 ment of case definitions or diagnoses under subsection
- 9 (a) (2) shall be carried out by the Secretary of Veterans Af-
- 10 fairs in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the
- 11 Secretary of Health and Human Services.
- 12 (c) Reports.—The Secretary shall submit to the Com-
- 13 mittees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of
- 14 Representatives an annual report on the status of the activi-
- 15 ties required by this section. The first such report shall be
- 16 submitted not later than six months after the date of the
- 17 enactment of this Act.
- 18 SEC. 5. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO VETERANS OF THE
- 19 **PERSIAN GULF WAR.**
- 20 (a) Outreach Program.—The Secretary of Veterans
- 21 Affairs shall develop and implement a comprehensive out-
- 22 reach program and information system to provide Persian
- 23 Gulf War veterans and their families with information re-
- 24 garding the following:

1	(1) The Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Reg-
2	istry established by the Persian Gulf War Veterans
3	Health Status Act (38 U.S.C. 527 note).
4	(2) Access to health services and health-related
5	benefits provided by or under the auspices of the De-
6	partment of Veterans Affairs, including—
7	(A) marriage and family counseling avail-
8	able under section 121 of the Veterans' Medical
9	Programs Amendments of 1992 (38 U.S.C.
10	1712A note);
11	(B) health care available under section
12	1710(e)(1)(C) of title 38, United States Code;
13	and
14	(C) health examinations, consultation, and
15	counseling available under section 703 of the
16	Persian Gulf War Veterans' Health Status Act
17	(38 U.S.C. 527 note).
18	(3) Compensation and benefits related to disabil-
19	ities resulting from service in the Persian Gulf War,
20	including disabilities resulting from illness that re-
21	sulted from such service.
22	(4) Significant developments in research relating
23	to the health consequences of service in the Persian
24	Gulf War

1	(5) Any other information that the Secretary de-
2	termines to be appropriate.
3	(b) Toll-Free Telephone Number.—The informa-
4	tion system required by subsection (a) shall include the es-
5	tablishment and staffing of a toll-free telephone number for
6	the use of such veterans and their families.
7	(c) Further Information.—Section 702(f) of the
8	Persian Gulf War Veterans' Health Status Act (38 U.S.C.
9	527 note) is amended to read as follows:
10	"(f) Ongoing Outreach to Individuals Listed in
11	Registry.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall no-
12	tify each individual listed in the Registry or, in the case
13	of such an individual who is deceased, the surviving spouse,
14	children, or parents of such individual, at least quarterly,
15	by newsletter or by other means that the Secretary deter-
16	mines to be appropriate, of—
17	"(A) the status and findings of federally spon-
18	sored research relating to the illnesses of individuals
19	who served as members of the Armed Forces in the
20	Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian
21	Gulf War or to the illnesses of the family members of
22	such individuals;
23	"(B) compensation and benefits, including health
24	care and other health-related benefits, that may be
25	provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the

1	Department of Defense to an individual who served as
2	a member of the Armed Forces in the Persian Gulf
3	theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War or,
4	in the case of such an individual who is deceased, to
5	the surviving spouse, children, or parents of such an
6	individual; and
7	"(C) any other information that the Secretary
8	determines to be appropriate.
9	"(2) In preparing the newsletter or other means used
10	to provide information as required by paragraph (1), the
11	Secretary shall consult with veterans' service organizations.
12	"(3) The requirement of paragraph (1) shall not apply
13	regarding notification of any individual if that individual
14	makes a written request to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
15	that the notification not be provided.".
16	SEC. 6. COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR DISABILITY RE-
17	SULTING FROM ILLNESS ATTRIBUTED TO
18	SERVICE DURING THE PERSIAN GULF WAR.
19	(a) In General.—(1) Chapter 11 of title 38, United
20	States Code, is amended by adding at the end of subchapter
21	II the following new section:
22	"§ 1117. Compensation for disabilities associated with
23	Persian Gulf War
24	"(a) The Secretary shall pay compensation under this
25	subchapter to a Persian Gulf veteran suffering from a

- 1 chronic disability resulting from an undiagnosed illness (or
- 2 combination of undiagnosed illnesses) that became manifest
- 3 to a degree of 10 percent or more before the later of (1)
- 4 October 1, 1996, or (2) the end of the two-year period begin-
- 5 ning on the last date on which the veteran performed active
- 6 military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia theater
- 7 of operations while on active duty.
- 8 "(b) A disability for which compensation under this
- 9 subchapter is payable shall be considered to be service con-
- 10 nected for purposes of all other laws of the United States.
- 11 "(c) Compensation may not be paid under this section
- 12 with respect to a disability occurring in a veteran—
- 13 "(1) where there is affirmative evidence that the
- disability was not incurred by the veteran during
- 15 service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations dur-
- ing the Persian Gulf War; or
- 17 "(2) where there is affirmative evidence to estab-
- 18 lish that an intercurrent injury or illness which is a
- 19 recognized cause of the disability was suffered by the
- veteran between the date of the veteran's most recent
- 21 departure from that theater of operations while on ac-
- 22 tive duty and the onset of the disability.
- 23 "(d) The Secretary may not make payments under this
- 24 section with respect to a disability for which compensation
- 25 is paid under this section for any month after the month

- 1 during which the Secretary determines that such disability
- 2 was not incurred as the result of service in the Southwest
- 3 Asia theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War.
- 4 "(e) For purposes of this section, the term 'Persian
- 5 Gulf veteran' means a veteran who served on active duty
- 6 in the Armed Forces in the Southwest Asia theater of oper-
- 7 ations during the Persian Gulf War.
- 8 "(f)(1) No payment may be made under this section
- 9 for any month that begins after the end of the three-year
- 10 period beginning on the date of the enactment of this sec-
- 11 tion.
- 12 "(2) If, before the end of such three-year period, the
- 13 Secretary submits to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs
- 14 of the Senate and House of Representatives a report stating
- 15 that, as of the date of the report, no diagnoses for the ill-
- 16 nesses referred to in subsection (a) can be made based on
- 17 current medical knowledge, such three-year period shall con-
- 18 tinue for an additional three years.
- 19 "(3) The Secretary shall submit to those committees
- 20 a report addressing the issue of diagnoses of such illnesses
- 21 not later than April 1, 1997.".
- 22 (2) The table of sections at the beginning of such chap-
- 23 ter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section
- 24 1116 the following new item:

[&]quot;1117. Compensation for disabilities associated with Persian Gulf War.".

- 1 (b) Effective Date.—Section 1117 of title 38, Unit-
- 2 ed States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect
- 3 on October 1, 1994.
- 4 SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR PER-
- 5 SIAN GULF ILLNESS RESEARCH.
- 6 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Depart-
- 7 ment of Veterans Affairs \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years
- 8 1995 through 1997 for the conduct of research, which the
- 9 Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Sec-
- 10 retary of Defense and the Secretary of Health and Human
- 11 Services, determines would advance understanding of health
- 12 risks and effects of service during the Persian Gulf War and
- 13 effective means of treating such health effects.
- 14 SEC. 8. SURVEY OF PERSIAN GULF VETERANS.
- 15 (a) In General.—There is authorized to be appro-
- 16 priated to the Department of Veterans Affairs such sums
- 17 as are needed for fiscal year 1995 for the conduct of a sur-
- 18 vey of Persian Gulf veterans to gather information on the
- 19 incidence and nature of health problems occurring in Per-
- 20 sian Gulf veterans and their families.
- 21 (b) COORDINATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF DE-
- 22 FENSE.—The survey under subsection (a) shall be carried
- 23 out in coordination with the Secretary of Defense.
- 24 (c) Persian Gulf Veteran.—For purposes of this
- 25 section, a Persian Gulf veteran is an individual who served

- 1 on active duty in the Armed Forces in the Southwest Asia
- 2 theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War as de-
- 3 fined in section 101(33) of title 38, United States Code.

4 SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION FOR EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES.

- 5 (a) Study of Health Consequences of Persian
- 6 GULF SERVICE.—If the National Academy of Sciences in-
- 7 cludes in the report required by section 706(b) of the Veter-
- 8 ans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–585) a find-
- 9 ing that there is a sound basis for an epidemiological study
- 10 or studies on the health consequences of service in the Per-
- 11 sian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War
- 12 and recommends the conduct of such a study or studies, the
- 13 Secretary of Veterans Affairs is authorized to carry out such
- 14 study.
- 15 (b) Oversight.—(1) The Secretary shall seek to enter
- 16 into an agreement with the Medical Follow-Up Agency
- 17 (MFUA) of the Institute of Medicine of the National Acad-
- 18 emy of Sciences for (A) the review of proposals to conduct
- 19 the research referred to in subsection (a), (B) oversight of
- 20 such research, and (C) review of the research findings.
- 21 (2) If the Secretary is unable to enter into an agree-
- 22 ment under paragraph (1) with the entity specified in that
- 23 paragraph, the Secretary shall enter into an agreement de-
- 24 scribed in that paragraph with another appropriate sci-
- 25 entific organization which does not have a connection to

- 1 the Department of Veterans Affairs. In such a case, the Sec-
- 2 retary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs
- 3 of the Senate and House of Representatives, at least 90 days
- 4 before the date on which the agreement is entered into, no-
- 5 tice in writing identifying the organization with which the
- 6 Secretary intends to enter into the agreement.
- 7 (c) Access to Data.—The Secretary shall enter into
- 8 agreements with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary
- 9 of Health and Human Services to make available for the
- 10 purposes of any study described in subsection (a) all data
- 11 that the Secretary, in consultation with the National Acad-
- 12 emy of Sciences and the contractor, considers relevant to
- 13 the study.
- 14 (d) AUTHORIZATION.—There are authorized to be ap-
- 15 propriated to the Department such sums as are necessary
- 16 for the conduct of studies described in subsection (a).
- 17 SEC. 10. EXTENSION OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSEL-
- 18 ING AVAILABILITY FOR PERSIAN GULF WAR
- 19 **VETERANS.**
- 20 (a) In General.—Section 121(a) of the Veterans'
- 21 Medical Programs Amendments of 1992 (38 U.S.C. 1712A
- 22 note) is amended by striking out "September 30, 1994" and
- 23 inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1998".
- 24 (b) Authorization of Appropriations.—Section
- 25 121(g) of the Veterans' Medical Programs Amendments of

- 1 1992 (38 U.S.C. 1712A note) is amended by striking out
- 2 "and 1994" and inserting in lieu thereof "through 1999".
- 3 SEC. 11. COST-SAVINGS PROVISIONS.
- 4 (a) Election of Death Pension by Surviving
- 5 Spouse.—Section 1317 of title 38, United States Code, is
- 6 amended—
- 7 (1) by striking out "No person" and inserting in
- 8 lieu thereof "(a) Except as provided in subsection (b),
- 9 no person"; and
- 10 (2) by adding at the end the following:
- 11 "(b) A surviving spouse who is eligible for dependency
- 12 and indemnity compensation by reason of any death occur-
- 13 ring after December 31, 1956, may elect to receive death
- 14 pension instead of such compensation.".
- 15 (b) Policy Regarding Cost-of-Living Adjustment
- 16 IN COMPENSATION RATES FOR FISCAL YEAR 1995.—The
- 17 fiscal year 1995 cost-of-living adjustments in the rates of
- 18 and limitations for compensation payable under chapter 11
- 19 of title 38, United States Code, and of dependency and in-
- 20 demnity compensation payable under chapter 13 of such
- 21 title will be no more than a percentage equal to the percent-
- 22 age by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the
- 23 Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased
- 24 effective December 1, 1994, as a result of a determination
- 25 under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)), with

- 1 all increased monthly rates and limitations (other than in-
- 2 creased rates or limitations equal to a whole dollar amount)
- 3 rounded down to the next lower dollar.

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